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Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012

Learning disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years and older, 2012

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.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0[s]	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
[p]	preliminary
[r]	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
[E]	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published
*	significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Learning disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years and older, 2012

The results presented in this fact sheet are from the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD), which surveyed residents of private dwellings who reported an activity limitation and who were aged 15 years and older at the time of the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS).

According to the CSD, respondents are considered to have a disability not only if they report a difficulty or impairment due to a long-term condition or health problem, but also if they report that they are limited in their daily activities as a result of their condition. Appendix A describes how the CSD defines learning disabilities.

It should be noted that the population living in institutions, including residential care facilities, was not included in the 2012 CSD. Further details are available in the *Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012: Concepts and Methods Guide*. 89-654-X2014001.

According to the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD), 3,775,900 Canadians aged 15 years and older, reported some type of disability, representing 13.7% of the adult population. Approximately 622,300 of the adult population (2.3%) reported a learning disability (Table 1). The most prevalent underlying learning conditions reported included attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and other developmental disorders of scholastic skills.[1]

Table 1
Prevalence of disability by type, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012

Disability type	Population	Percentage
Total disability	**3,775,900**	**13.7**
Pain-related	2,664,200	9.7
Flexibility	2,078,000	7.6
Mobility	1,971,800	7.2
Mental health-related	1,059,600	3.9
Dexterity	953,000	3.5
Hearing	874,600	3.2
Seeing	756,400	2.7
Memory	628,200	2.3
Learning	622,300	2.3
Developmental	160,600	0.6
Unknown	79,500	0.3

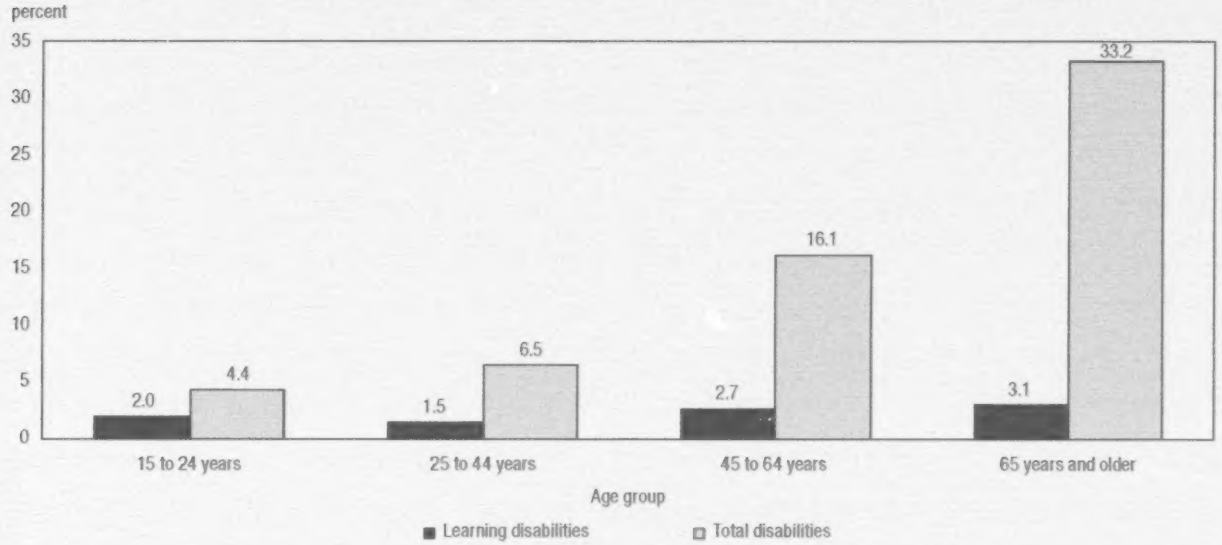
Note: Individuals may have more than one type of disability; therefore, the sum of all individual disability types is greater than the number of "total disabilities".
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Chart 1 highlights that the prevalence of learning disabilities as a proportion of all disabilities declines with age. Among those aged 15 to 24, 4.4% reported at least one type of disability, and nearly half of them (2.0%) reported a learning disability.

Learning disability rates among men and women were not significantly different.

1 These include conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and developmental aphasia (http://www.icd10data.com/ICD10CM/Codes/F01-F99/F80-F89/F81-/F819)

Chart 1
Prevalence of learning disabilities and total disabilities by age group, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012



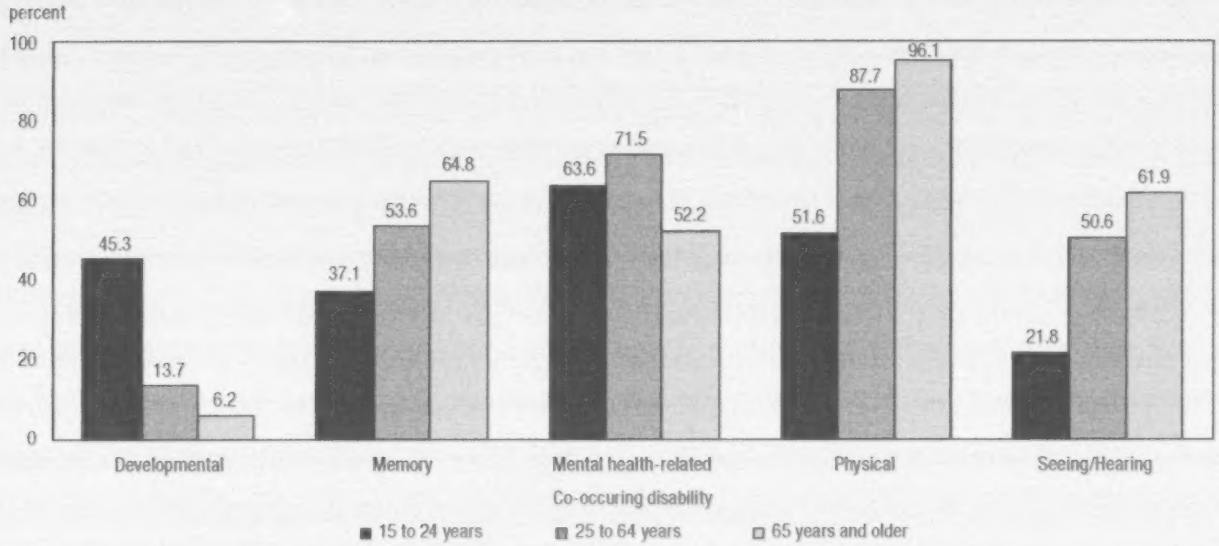
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Multiple disabilities

Learning disabilities frequently co-occurred with other types of disability: 96.3% of respondents who reported a learning disability also reported at least one other type of disability.

The pattern of co-occurrence varied by age. Mental health-related disabilities had the highest rate of co-occurrence for adults aged 15 to 24 with a learning disability, while physical disability had the highest rate of co-occurrence for adults aged 25 and over.

Chart 2
Prevalence of co-occurring disability types among adults with a learning disability, by age group, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012



Note: Physical includes mobility, flexibility, dexterity, and pain-related disability types.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

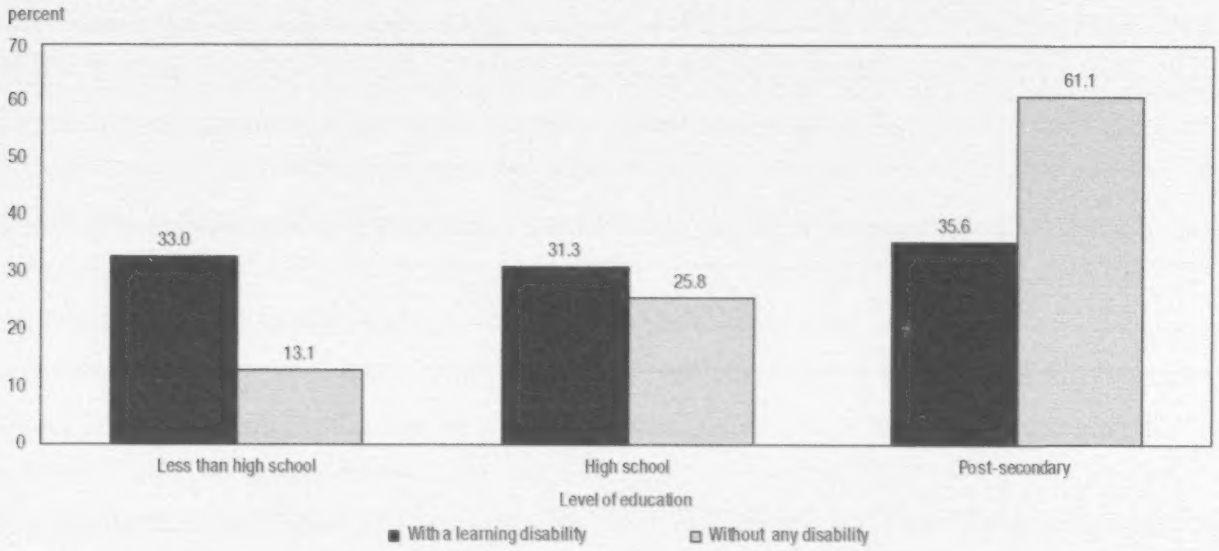
Education

Educational attainment

Adults with a learning disability[2] had overall lower levels of educational attainment than those who did not have any type of disability. Among adults aged 15 to 64, currently not attending school, those with a learning disability were more likely than adults without any disability to have not completed high school (33.0% versus 13.1%). They were also significantly less likely to have completed post-secondary qualifications[3] (35.6% versus 61.1%).

2 *It is important to note that 96.3% of those reporting a learning disability, also reported at least one other type of disability.*
3 Post-secondary includes trades certificates, college diplomas, university certificates below bachelor level and university degrees.

Chart 3
Proportion of adults with a learning disability compared to those without any disability, by highest level of education, aged 15 to 64 years, Canada, 2012



Notes: Excludes population still in school. Post-secondary includes trades certificates, college diplomas, university certificates below bachelor level and university degrees.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Effect of disability on educational experiences

Among adults with a learning disability aged 15 and over who currently were or had recently been in school, almost all (97.8%) stated that their disability directly impacted their educational experience.[4] The most common impacts reported by those with a learning disability were the following: taking longer to achieve education milestones, changing their choice of courses or career, and taking fewer courses. Many also reported social difficulties including being avoided or excluded, and being bullied (Table 2).

Table 2
Effect of disability on educational experiences of adults with a learning disability, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012

Effect of disability	Percentage
Took longer to achieve current level due to disability	63.3
Choice of courses/career influenced by disability	61.3
Took fewer courses due to disability	61.1
People avoided/excluded you in school due to disability	58.3
Bullied at school because of disability	50.0
Changed course of studies due to disability	47.9
Education interrupted due to disability	45.7
Attended special education classes in regular school	45.6
Discontinued education due to disability	40.2

Note: Includes individuals currently in school or in school within the last five years and who had a disability while in school.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

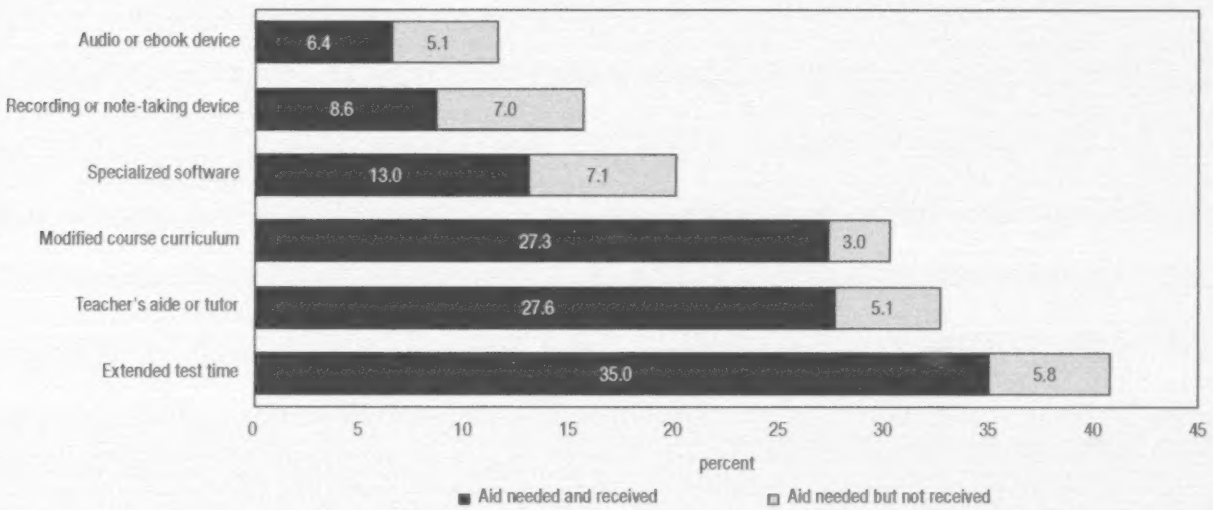
4 Note that these individuals could have multiple disabilities, and thus their educational experiences could have been a result of any combination of them.

Educational aids and services

Over half (51.0%) of adults with a learning disability aged 15 and over and who recently attended school required some sort of education aid or service. Of these, 93.3% stated that at least some of their needs had been met, while 6.7% felt that none of their needs had been met.

The most commonly required supports reported were extensions in time for tests (40.8%) and teacher's aides or tutors (32.7%) and these needs in particular were predominantly met (Chart 4). Technology-based supports, such as specialized software, recording devices, and audio/e-book devices were less likely to be needed. However, adults with a learning disability who reported needing technology-based supports were less likely to receive them. For example, about half (56.0%) of those who stated they required an audio or e-book device received this aid.

Chart 4
Met and unmet needs for education aids and services among adults with a learning disability who currently attend or recently attended school, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Respondents with a learning disability were also asked about learning disability-specific aids and devices, such as computers with voice recognition. Approximately 32.8% stated they needed at least one type of learning aid, and of these 41.1% reported this need was not met. The most commonly stated reason for having an unmet need was the cost associated with the aid or device; 71.6% cited this as the primary reason for not having had their needs met.

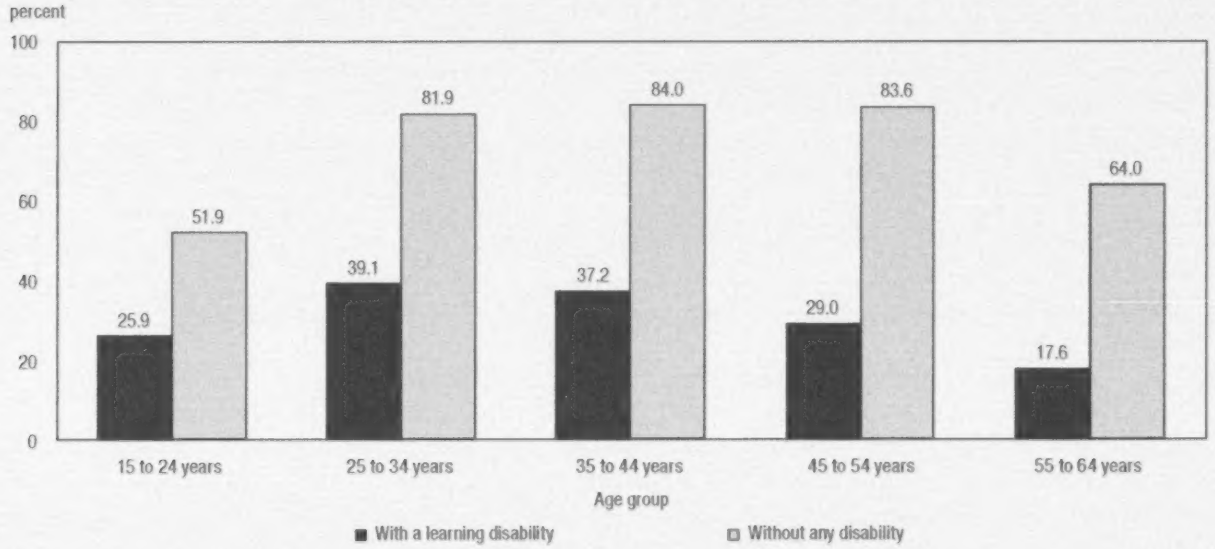
Employment

Labour force status

More than half (63.5%) of adults aged 15 to 64 with a learning disability[5], were not in the labour force, and another (7.7%) were unemployed.

The employment rate of working-age adults, aged 15 to 64, with a learning disability was 28.8%, less than half the employment rate for those without any disability (73.6%).

Chart 5
Employment rates of adults with a learning disability and without any disability by age group, aged 15 to 64 years, Canada, 2012



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

The low employment levels of adults with a learning disability relative to adults without any disability are observable for all age groups (Chart 5), with the largest relative differences appearing in older ages.

Job modifications

Among adults with a learning disability, who are or recently had been employed[6], 55.5% stated they needed at least one type of work accommodation. Of these, 71.0% stated at least some of their needs had been met while on the job. The most commonly required accommodations were modified work hours (39.1%) and modified work duties (23.3%).

5 It is important to note that 96.3% of those reporting a learning disability, also reported at least one other type of disability.

6 Includes those who were employed, those who were unemployed and had worked in the past five years, those who were not in the labour force but had worked in the past five years (and were able to work or stated that an accommodation would allow them to work), and those who retired within the past five years who stated that their retirement was involuntary.

Hours worked

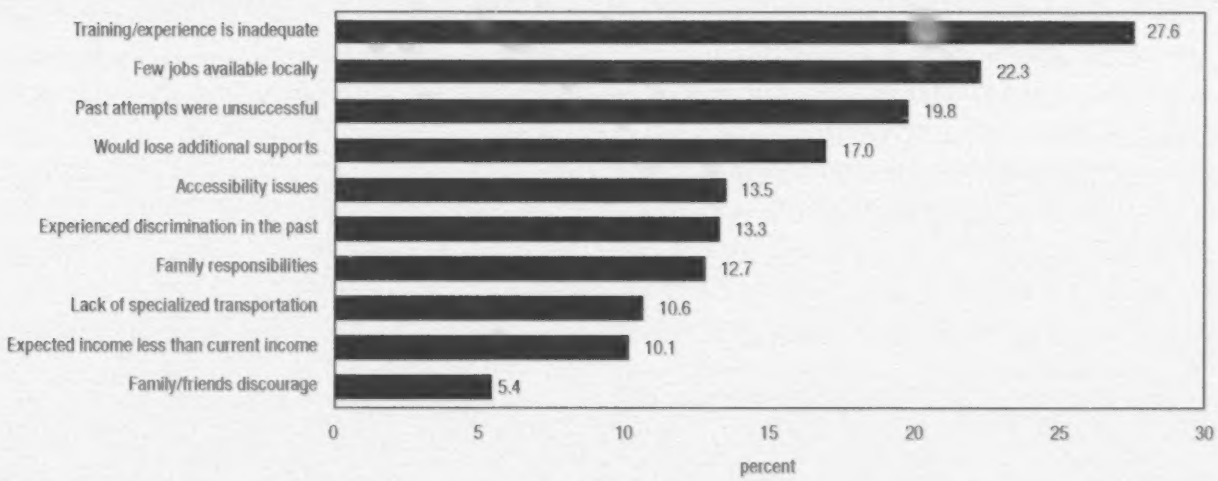
Employment disadvantage for adults with a learning disability extends beyond the important first step of obtaining a job. Employed adults with a learning disability also worked significantly fewer hours[7] per week on average than those without any disability (28 hours vs. 37 hours).

Not in the labour force

Many adults with a learning disability, who were not in the labour force, encountered barriers that discouraged them from looking for work.

As noted earlier, 63.4% of adults with a learning disability, aged 15 to 64, were not in the labour force. The most commonly cited deterrents to entering the labour force reported by adults with a learning disability were inadequate training or experience, a lack of locally available jobs, and having been unsuccessful in the past (Chart 6).

Chart 6
Prevalence of job search barriers among adults with a learning disability who were not in the labour force, aged 15 to 64 years, Canada, 2012



Note: Excludes those who retired more than five years earlier, those who retired voluntarily, and those who stated they had never worked but that their condition did not limit the amount or kind of work they could perform.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

7 Refers to the actual number of hours worked for pay during the week prior to the reference week on the National Household Survey.

Income

Personal income for working-age adults

Working-age adults (aged 15 to 64) with a learning disability[8] reported a median total personal income[9] of approximately $12,200—less than half that of those without any reported type of disability ($33,800). Adults with a learning disability were more likely to rely on government transfers.[10] Among adults with a learning disability who received government transfers, the median transfer income was $9,470, over five times the amount for those without any disability ($1,650). Furthermore, 63.6% of adults with a learning disability received more from government transfers than they did from employment income, while this was true for only 18.7% of those without any disability.[11] Among those with employment income, median employment incomes for adults with a learning disability were less than half for those without any disability ($16,500 and $34,400 respectively).

Conclusion

Adults with a learning disability experience difficulties with many aspects of their day to day lives. Poorer educational outcomes, relative to adults without any disability, can be observed for all ages. Lower levels of education and training translate to employment disadvantage and labour force discouragement, and in turn much lower levels of income and higher levels of reliance on government transfers. Furthermore, their learning disability is likely to be one of several disabilities, which in combination, may negatively influence their education and employment experiences.

8 It is important to note that 96.3% of those reporting a learning disability, also reported at least one other type of disability.

9 Personal income estimates include those who received zero or negative income.

10 Government transfers include a variety of transfer payments from federal, provincial, territorial, or municipal governments such as: Old Age Security; Guaranteed Income Supplements; Canada or Quebec Pension Plan; Employment Insurance; Social Assistance; Child Benefits; and other income from government sources.

11 Excludes individuals who did not receive either of the two income types.

Appendix A

Identification of adults with a learning disability

The 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) identified adults with a learning disability as those whose daily activities were limited because of difficulties caused by a learning condition. The survey used the newly developed Disability Screening Questions (DSQ) to identify disability. The initial step in identifying a learning disability was to establish the existence of a learning condition. This was done using two questions:

DSQ_25 Do you think you have a condition that makes it difficult in general for you to learn? This may include learning disabilities such as dyslexia, hyperactivity, attention problems, as well as other conditions.

DSQ_26 Has a teacher, doctor or other health care professional ever said that you have a learning disability?

Those who answered yes to one or both of these questions received a follow up question to determine how often the condition limited their daily activities:

DSQ_27 How often are your daily activities limited by this condition?

- o Never
- o Rarely
- o Sometimes
- o Often
- o Always

Those who indicated being limited at least rarely were asked another follow up question to determine the amount of difficulty experienced.

DSQ_28 How much difficulty do you have with your daily activities because of this condition?

- o No difficulty
- o Some difficulty
- o A lot of difficulty
- o You cannot do most activities

Respondents who reported being limited at least sometimes were automatically considered to have a learning disability. If they reported being limited 'rarely,' they were only considered to have a learning disability if they also reported having 'a lot of difficulty' or if they reported being unable to do most activities. All others were defined as not having a learning disability.

An estimated 934,100 Canadian adults reported a learning condition. Of these, 622,300 (2.3% of the adult population) had a disability, while the remaining 311, 800 had a condition that either was not limiting or was rarely limiting with some or no difficulty in daily activities.